

May God bless you, and may God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 11:43 a.m. from the Map Room at the White House to the convention meeting in San Antonio, TX. In his remarks, he referred to Frank S. Page, president, Southern Baptist Convention; and Richard Land, president, Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

Remarks Announcing the Appointment of Edward W. Gillespie as White House Counselor to the President

June 13, 2007

When Dan told me that he was going to leave the White House so he could spend more time with his three young children and his wife, I never thought I'd be able to find somebody that could possibly do as good a job as he has done. I'm fortunate that Ed Gillespie has agreed to join the administration. He is a seasoned hand who has got excellent judgment. He's a good strategic thinker that I know will do a fine job.

We're going to miss Dan. He's been a friend of mine for—gosh, since 1993, but I fully understand why a young dad needs to be with his family. And I admire the fact that he has set such an important priority. And I also—thank you for your service.

And I also thank Ed for agreeing to come over here to the White House. We've got a lot to do. We've got to continue laying the foundation for peace. We've got an immigration bill that will help enforce our borders. We've got an energy bill that we need to get out that will make us less dependent on foreign oil. And we've got to remind the Congress that they need to be fiscally wise with the people's money; that we can balance this budget of ours without raising taxes.

And so, Ed, I'm looking forward to working with you. I thank you for your service. And, Bartlett, good luck to you, brother. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:43 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the Bombing of the Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra, Iraq

June 13, 2007

I condemn in the strongest terms today's terrorist attack on the Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra. This barbarous act was clearly aimed at inflaming sectarian tensions among the peoples of Iraq and defeating their aspirations for a secure, democratic, and prosperous country. I join Iraq's leaders in calling on all Iraqis to refrain from acts of vengeance and reject Al Qaida's scheme to sow hatred among the Iraqi people and to instead join together in fighting Al Qaida as the true enemy of a free and secure Iraq.

At the Prime Minister's request, the coalition has dispatched a rapid reaction force to Samarra to assist Iraqi forces in guarding the mosque and restoring calm and security to the area. The United States also stands ready to help the Iraqi people rebuild and restore this holy shrine. I call upon the international community and Iraq's neighbors to do everything in their power to help Iraq's Government and people combat the terrorists, especially in stopping the flow of foreign terrorists into Iraq. Those responsible for this outrage must be found and brought to justice. The United States stands by the Iraqi people in this difficult moment and remains fully committed to helping all Iraqis realize their dreams of a peaceful future.

NOTE: In his statement, the President referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

Statement on the Death of Parliament Member Walid Eido of Lebanon

June 13, 2007

I strongly condemn today's assassination of Lebanese Member of Parliament Walid Eido, who was murdered along with his son, two bodyguards, and a number of others.

There has been a clear pattern of assassinations and attempted assassinations in Lebanon since October 2004. Those working for a sovereign and democratic Lebanon have always been the ones targeted. The victims have always been those who sought an end